

MEETING OF MARCH 20, 2007

Minutes of Meeting of Mar. 13, 2007

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Our speaker today is Jeff S. Flathau, CFO and owner of Flathau's Fine Foods. He is here with his wife and co-owner Heather, who serves as CEO of the company. Jeff has served as CFO of Flathau's Fine Foods since its founding in 2002, where he oversees finance, recruitment, advertising and special projects. He is also CEO of Flathau's Fine Catering, a corporate catering service serving South Mississippi. Prior to this position, Jeff was President and Founder of Simply Southern Foods / The Mississippi Gourmet from 1992 – 2002, where he ran daily operations for both the catering and gourmet food business. He has owned several restaurants and catering companies, and has a degree in Political Science from Southern Miss.

Flathau's Fine Foods was born out of a desire by the Flathaus to focus on the gourmet food industry at a national level. They started with a shortbread cookie based on the ones that Jeff's grandmother baked, and after some good-but-not-great attempts, Heather undertook the challenge to create a

winner. With no formal food training or major domestic engineering successes under her belt, and Jeff's words ringing in her ears -- "Don't burn the house down" – the hugely successful Peppermint Snaps were born.



Raspberry Snaps came next, along with a unique look and packaging in gallon and liter-size paint cans. The public response was overwhelming. Butterscotch and Key Lime Snaps were next, and the latest Snap member – Cinnamon – is gathering a fan base. Cheddar Chipotle Cheese Straws add a savory snack to the list of Flathau treats. The Snaps and Straws have won numerous awards at gourmet food shows and the products were named in the Top 50 Under \$50 list in *Real Simple* magazine in 2006. Rachel Ray named Raspberry Snaps her "Snack of the Day" on her show in November. Their client base includes major department stores, catalog companies, gift stores, gourmet and kitchen shops and resorts. You may also purchase from their website, www.flathausfinefoods.com. Flathau's Fine Foods strives daily to fulfill its mission statement: Creating the greatest cookies in the world through superior quality, excellent pricing and valued customer service.

Watch for Flathau's Fine Foods on an upcoming episode of the Food Network's *Unwrapped*, that examines how the tasty Snaps are created.

How will your club celebrate World Water Day on 22 March?

The world marks [World Water Day](#) on 22 March. Rotary clubs and districts are encouraged to celebrate World Water Day by initiating discussions, taking part in community events, and kicking off their own water-related service projects.

What's happening on World Water Day?

Rotarians in District 6900 (Georgia, USA) will participate in two community walks in Atlanta and Columbus to help raise awareness of water issues. [Visit Ethos™ Water's World Water Day](#) site to sign up.

[The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations](#), the UN agency that is coordinating World Water Day 2007 activities, is hosting a ceremony on 22 March at its headquarters in Rome. Rotarians who are interested in learning more about the event may contact RI's FAO representatives Marco Randone (fax: 39-06-678-4370) and [Antonio Lico](#).

Why water?

Nearly 20 percent of the world population doesn't have access to safe and clean drinking water, while 2.6 billion live without basic sanitation facilities. These problems exacerbate the spread of preventable waterborne illnesses that result in the death of about 6,000 people every day, the majority of whom are children. Water issues are said to be leading contributors to worldwide poverty and social instability.

According to the FAO, water use has grown twice as fast as the population has increased in the last century. This means that more regions are chronically short of potable water. This year's World Water Day theme of "Coping with water scarcity" helps highlight this issue.

What are Rotary clubs doing?

Water projects have been a major focus of Rotary club and district projects for years. Rotary International presidents, including [current RI President William B. Boyd](#), have emphasized tackling water issues.

A Rotary project is helping a small community near San Pablo, Ecuador, get potable water as part of a series of ongoing service projects. With support of other clubs in their districts, the Rotary Club of Flemington, New Jersey, USA, (District 7150) and its host partner, the Rotary Club of Guayaquil Centenario, Ecuador, (District 7510), have just embarked on a Rotary Foundation Matching Grant project to extend a public water line from a neighboring community to benefit some 156 villagers. Previous Rotary projects in the community included the construction of 39 new homes with electricity and setting up a medical clinic. [Visit the project's Web site](#).

Just five years ago, the village of Sayod, Tajikistan, sat on miles of barren ground and its residents were among thousands living in high-altitude valleys without access to clean water for their families, livestock, or land. After helping former interns start the country's first Rotary club in Dushanbe, John Capece of the Rotary Club of LaBelle, Florida, a hydrologic engineer, spearheaded a Rotary project that uses gravity to deliver fresh water from the mountains without the need for electricity. The project, now under expansion, will provide water to 15,000 Tajiks. Learn more by visiting www.rotarywater.org or reading the April 2007 issue of *The Rotarian*.

Water: Our Looming Crisis

Water is life. An adult can survive without food for weeks, but the human body can't go more than a few days without water. Yet in our world today, an alarming number of people struggle every day to get it.

"It's daunting when you think of it," says Ron Denham, a member of the Rotary Club of Toronto-Eglinton, Canada, and general

coordinator of the Water, Health, and Hunger Concerns Resource Group for 2005-06, "the number of people affected – 1.2 billion without access to safe drinking water, 2.4 billion without sanitation."

In rural communities in Africa and Asia, women and children can spend several hours of their day retrieving water from some far-off source, time otherwise spent with family or supporting their children. And the quality of that water they access often varies, leaving them susceptible to contaminants and water-borne diseases. According to the United Nations, some 6,000 children die every day from diseases associated with the lack of safe drinking water, inadequate sanitation, and poor hygiene.

The painful irony is that water appears to be abundant on our "blue planet." It covers more than two-thirds of the earth's surface. But only 2.5 percent of that water is fresh water. And 99.7 percent of that freshwater is unavailable, trapped in glaciers, ice sheets, and mountainous areas. This means that about 0.3 percent of the planet's freshwater is shared by all of its people. And while the amount of available freshwater remains stable, the number of people sharing it continues to grow.

Few things affect human survival, and the production of everyday necessities, as directly as water does. But with such a broad range of challenges and the unfathomable numbers of people affected, how can Rotary clubs approach the issue with any hope of making a difference?

Denham says that there is amazingly simple, affordable technology to assist in solving the vexing problem of supplying water to those who don't have access. Sometimes the key is for clubs to identify a community's needs and to be sure that the work done results in a realistically sustainable benefit.

Biosand filters, he says, are a cheap, reliable way to turn contaminated water into drinkable water. Rotarians from Calgary, Alberta, Canada, have set up a

factory in Haiti to manufacture the filters and implement them in that country.

An even cheaper tool for water purification seems almost too good to be true: plastic soda bottles. Bottles made from polyethylene terephthalate (PET) can be filled with dirty water and placed in sunlight. The sun's rays do all the work.

"Glass won't do it, but PET plastic will," he says.

Creating awareness is also a key ingredient in the work that Rotary clubs can do, Denham says. He points to 22 March – World Water Day – as an opportunity. ([Read more on how Rotarians can participate in World Water Day 2006.](#))

"We'd like every Rotary club to feature a speaker on water during that week," he says.

The range of water project opportunities available to the world's Rotary clubs is varied and, above all, necessary.

"The important thing is not to be daunted by the immensity of the task," Denham says. "The reality is that Rotarians in their own way are having a huge impact on the water-deprived people of the world. I think of a simple adage: How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time."

**Anthony G. Craine is a former senior editor of *The Rotarian*. Writer Todd Wilkinson also contributed to this article, which was adapted from the January 2005 issue of *The Rotarian*.*

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